

MFL Statement of Intent

'You live a new life for every new language you speak.

If you know only one language, you live only once' – Czech Proverb

At All Saints Academy we have high aspirations that the majority of our students will study a language. This is because we believe the awe and wonder of the world around us needs to be appreciated and that through learning a language we will raise the aspirations of our students to travel, empowering them to take control of their futures. Not only does science suggest that if you are bilingual there are physical changes to your brain but also that learning a language changes the way you see the world, as there is history behind every phrase and concept.

The purpose of learning a language is to communicate better with other people from different parts of the world so that we can *Live Well Together with dignity, faith and hope* – the Academy vision. Learning a language and learning how languages work dignify our students by enabling them to clearly articulate their hopes and aspirations. By helping them on a daily basis to work with teachers and groups of students we help them have faith in themselves so that they can achieve everything they desire.

Languages can be challenging for our demographic particularly when students struggle with their home language and sometimes the value of learning a language is not always fully understood. Simple scaffolds are used such as sentence builders as we build self-belief and confidence. We offer extra and differentiated activities throughout the course to challenge the most-able students, typically EAL students with a propensity for languages. The links between certain home languages, such as Romanian, Italian or Portuguese, with the MFL that we teach in All Saints, make these particular students able to challenge themselves in a different way and help others as well. Other home languages, such as Arabic, Turkish and German, also have links to Spanish and French, so students have a chance to talk about their background and family history.

Of our main feeder schools two deliver Spanish and one delivers French. When students join us from Year Six their coverage of languages is variable as not all primary schools have specialists. Most students arrive knowing some basic word groups and the ability to form some very simple sentences verbally such as: *'My name is...'* and *'I am X years old.'* Therefore, we use retrieval tasks throughout Year 7 to consolidate the vocabulary learnt during KS2.

Spanish is spoken by half of the planet and we start by making students aware of how learning this language opens doors to many career paths. The Spanish course reflects the world pupils live in, using contexts familiar to them in their everyday lives and teaching them the vocabulary that they need to communicate with young Spanish people of their own age on topics that interest and stimulate them. They are introduced to young Spanish people and given an insight into the everyday life and culture of Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, encouraging intercultural understanding.

French is widely spoken around the world, in every continent. Lots of our students come from different parts of the world, where French has had a huge influence in the way they speak. English itself has a lot of influence from French, and many words that they use in their everyday life have French or Latin origins. Learning about the etymology of the words they use every day, its connection to Latin and French, is very stimulating for them to know the history of their own language.

The curriculum focuses on the three pillars on language learning: grammar, vocabulary and phonics. All lessons have a grammar objective so that grammar is fully integrated ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to learn the underlying structures of the language thoroughly. We offer them different and personalized booklets to help SEN/PP students and offer extra and differentiated activities throughout the course to challenge the most able students. In every presentation, we have activities prepared for the most able students; they stretch their skills, add some extra knowledge and information for them to research, and widen their language horizon.

Across **all year groups**, we give equal weighting to all four key language skills (Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing) in the hope that during KS3 we prepare them well for the demands of KS4.

Research informed practice in Languages (French and Spanish)

Using a narrative, almost story like approach to teach new content has helped make new learning 'stick' in languages. This approach has been used recently after having read sections of Mary Myatt's *Gallumafry to coherence*, which focuses on the importance of deep knowledge and a logical and coherent sequence and has had an impact in both French and Spanish. Rachel Hawkes' research into Modern foreign languages has influenced us and led to a more balanced skill based curriculum. Gianfranco Conti equally feeds into this with his resources and research. These approaches have led us to adopting a specific, well thought out curriculum to allow each learner to reach their zone of proximal development and further ensure that they are being exposed to the best techniques and cultural capital that an education in languages can offer.

Specific support planned for SEND students:

The lessons contain star tasks for students of a higher ability in languages. Some teachers also use applications such as language gym, kahoot and blookey to enable stretch and challenge. For SEND students written tasks are broken down and support is provided in the form of sentence starters, learning mats in French, model answers and key vocabulary sheets. Gap fill style tasks are also provided.

Year 7

Substantive Knowledge (the what):

The topics we talk about in **Year 7** are: personal descriptions (name, age, family, pets, personality), free time activities (with special emphasis on **Present Tense** structures), school life (subjects, facilities, verbs of opinion), family and friends (physical descriptions, the place where you live, celebrations), and city life (activities, places, with some emphases on **Near Future Tense** structures).

Disciplinary Knowledge (the how):

We add some emphasis on the following: recycling of language and structures throughout the course to aid language retention; skills pupils need to acquire for future success at GCSE (including well-embedded pronunciation tasks and listening, reading, speaking and writing skills); clear grammar progression and resources to help with active learning of grammar; and practice of task types relevant to the 9–1 GCSE.

Year 8

Substantive Knowledge

The topics that we cover are: holidays (with special emphasis on **Preterite Tense** structures), media and technology (mobile phones, music, TV), food and restaurants, parties and celebrations (with special emphasis on Near Future Tense structures), and summer camps (where everything taught during the year is put together).

Disciplinary Knowledge

We continue to revise and place emphasis on the skills which have been learnt in Year seven and then add the following grammar points to the Year eight curriculum:

The preterite of regular and irregular verbs, use of the comparative, constructing negative sentences (With the use of words like no, nothing and never) as well as formal and informal structures.

Year 9

Substantive Knowledge (the what):

The topics we talk about in Year 9 are: hobbies and interests, jobs and careers, health and exercise, environment and volunteering and summer holidays in a Spanish or French city (where the student is tested on everything learnt up to this point since the beginning of Year 7).

Disciplinary Knowledge (the how):

In **Year 9**, we further consolidate our students' linguistic capabilities by revising previously acquired knowledge and further ensuring students are able: to identify and use tenses or other structures which convey the present, past and future in the language being studied, to develop and use a wide-ranging and deepening vocabulary which goes beyond their immediate needs and interests; or to speak coherently and confidently, with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation.

KS4 GCSE

Substantive Knowledge (the what):

The topics in which we have divided this 2-year period to cover the GCSE content is the following:

- Holidays: with special emphasis in Preterite Tense structures and verbs of opinion.
- School Life: with special emphasis in Present Tense and Imperfect Tense structures.
- Friends and Family: using descriptions, dialogues and introducing a range of connectives.
- Hobbies and Interests: using stem-changing verbs and the Perfect Tense.
- Cities: with special emphasis in positive and negative sentences.
- Celebrations and Festivities: using the passive voice and irregular patterns.
- Jobs and Careers: using all different forms of verbs, introducing the subjunctive.
- World and Environment: exploring the subjunctive and introducing the pluperfect.

Disciplinary Knowledge (the how):

Students start their GCSE in Year 10 with a course designed to help all students achieve their potential in GCSE Spanish and French. It is fully differentiated with parallel Higher and Foundation sets of activities. The course provides seamless progression from the curriculum taught in Year 9.

Grammar is introduced in a logical order and at the right pace for learners. Concepts are revisited and gradually combined with other concepts. The recycling of grammar helps students to grasp concepts and to use grammar independently across contexts.

All four language skills are systematically developed through the course and there is a focus on skills such as translation, understanding authentic and literary texts and spontaneous speaking. Exam preparation lessons and activities ensure that students are prepared for the final exams. Throughout the two-year period a focus on cultural content and on 'learning something new' helps to give students a sense of purpose and brings language learning to life.